

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1948.

ALL ITEMS - "C" SERIES.

Index numbers (with the weighted average of the six Capital Cities in 1923-27 as base of 1000) of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) for the June quarter, 1948, with figures for March quarter, 1948, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane 1227 (1193), Toowoomba 1232 (1199), Rockhampton 1225 (1191), Townsville 1263 (1230), Bundaberg 1203 (1165), and Warwick 1220 (1185).

During the quarter, all towns showed an increase of about 3 per cent., the increase for Brisbane being 2.8 per cent. This was the third successive quarter to show an increase of over 2 per cent. In Brisbane, the successive rises were 2.4, 2.6, and 2.8 per cent., making a total rise of 8.0 per cent. over the three quarters. This rise has not been equalled in any other nine-months period since the outbreak of the recent war, the nearest approach being 6.0 per cent. in the three quarters ended June, 1942.

The rise in food and grocery prices of 2.6 per cent. was less than half of that in the previous quarter (5.8 per cent.), but was the highest for the second quarter of any year since the beginning of the recent war, as food prices usually remain fairly steady, or even decline, in the second quarter of the year. The increase of 3.6 per cent. in clothing and footwear prices was the greatest in any quarter since the June quarter of 1943, and miscellaneous items, which had remained almost unchanged since the beginning of 1944, rose by 4.7 per cent.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increase, June Quarter, 1948.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.		From June Quarter, 1947.		From March Quarter, 1948.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane	42.2	9.1	2.8		
Toowoomba	44.8	8.0	-2.8		
Rockhampton	42.3	8.5	2.9		
Townsville	38.5	8.0	2.7		
Bundaberg	43.0	8.6	3.3		
Warwick	48.4	8.4	3.0		

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increase, June Quarter, 1948.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1948.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1948.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1948.
Brisbane ..	38.4	2.6	106.6	3.6	27.4	4.7
Toowoomba	48.3	2.5	100.6	3.7	26.7	4.0
Rockhampton	36.4	3.0	100.7	2.5	29.9	5.9
Townsville	32.9	2.7	102.5	3.3	25.9	4.1
Bundaberg	35.5	2.5	102.4	4.3	25.4	5.0
Warwick ..	41.7	2.7	107.5	3.9	28.0	4.1

FOOD AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) - "B" SERIES.

Index numbers for food and rent only ("B" Series) for June quarter, 1948 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 for the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane, 1058; Toowoomba, 1073; Rockhampton, 1047; Townsville, 1109; Bundaberg, 1012; and Warwick, 1023.

From March quarter, 1948, to June quarter, 1948, the "B" Series index showed increases in Brisbane, 1.8%; Toowoomba, 1.7%; Rockhampton, 2.1%; Townsville, 1.8%; Bundaberg, 2.0%; and Warwick, 1.9%.

The principal increases were in bread, eggs, meat, jam, and onions.

The rent index increased in Bundaberg, 0.6%, but remained stationary in all other towns.

Compared with June quarter, 1947, the "B" Series index increased in Brisbane, 9.5%; Toowoomba, 7.9%; Rockhampton, 8.6%; Townsville, 7.9%; Bundaberg, 8.0%; and Warwick, 8.0%.

The rent index showed no movement in Townsville, but increases were recorded in Brisbane, 0.1%; Toowoomba, 0.8%; Rockhampton, 0.1%; Bundaberg, 0.6%; and Warwick, 0.5%.

CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR, AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Clothing and footwear prices rose during the early years of the recent war to about 75 per cent. above their pre-war level in June, 1943. Prices were then stabilised, and the clothing and footwear index declined slightly from June quarter, 1943 to September quarter, 1945. Since that date, it has risen by 20.5 per cent., of which 12.0 per cent. occurred in the last twelve months. Prices in this group are now 106.6 per cent. above their pre-war level.

Miscellaneous items were nearly 20 per cent. above their pre-war price level by June, 1943. With the exception of an increase of about 1 per cent. in the March quarter, 1947, caused by an increase in the price of tobacco and cigarettes, this group remained fairly steady until the latest quarter, when an increase of 4.7 per cent., principally due to rises in tram and rail fares, lifted the group to 27.4 per cent. above its pre-war level.

COMPARISON OF COSTS IN QUEENSLAND CITIES.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1948, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	
Brisbane	..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Toowoomba	..	1.	0.	1.	1.	0.	4.	1.	0.	2.	19.	5.	
Rockhampton	..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	7.			18.	1.		19. 10.
Townsville	..	1.	0.	7.	1.	1.	5.	1.	0.	0.	19.	10.	
Bundaberg	..			19. 7.	1.	0.	8.			15.	10.		19. 10.
Warwick	..			19. 11.	1.	0.	3.			17.	5.		1. 0. 0.

Prices in all towns today are closer to Brisbane prices than they were in June, 1939. In Warwick, Bundaberg, and Rockhampton, in 1939, it took 10d., 6d., and 1d. less respectively to buy goods that would have cost £1 in Brisbane, but these margins have been reduced to 1d. and 5d. in Warwick and Bundaberg, and Rockhampton average prices today are the same as in Brisbane. In Toowoomba, lower prices in 1939 saved the consumer 3d. in £1 compared with Brisbane, but now £1 worth of goods costs 1d. more than in Brisbane. In Townsville, on the other hand, where in 1939 the goods cost 1s. 2d. more than in Brisbane, the disadvantage has now fallen to 7d.

BASIC WAGE RATES IN STATE CAPITAL CITIES.

The following table shows the Retail Price Index Number ("C" Series) for each of the six Capital Cities for the June quarter of 1948 and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State Industrial tribunals respectively. The fourth column shows the amounts which would be required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State Basic Wage in its own Capital City. The differences between these amounts and the State Basic Wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland Basic Wage over each of the other State Basic Wages.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates - June Quarter, 1948.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) June, 1948.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males.	State Court Basic Wage for Males.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
	Index.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1227	5. 13. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 17. 0.	- - -
Sydney ..	1305	6. 0. 0.	6. 0. 0.	5. 12. 10.	4. 2.
Melbourne ..	1272	5. 17. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 12. 10.	4. 2.
Adelaide ..	1262	5. 14. 0.	5. 17. 0.	5. 13. 9.	3. 3.
Perth ..	1238	5. 12. 0.	5. 17. 5.	5. 16. 4.	0. 8.
Hobart ..	1276	5. 15. 0.	5. 15. 0.	5. 10. 7.	6. 5

The rise in the "C" Series Index Number during the quarter ended June, 1948, caused a "cost of living" addition of 4s.0d. to the Commonwealth Basic Wage in Sydney, Adelaide, and Hobart, 3s.0d. in Brisbane and Perth, and 2s.0d. in Melbourne. The State Basic Wage in Brisbane, and in all other parts of Queensland, was increased by 3s.0d. The State Basic Wage in Perth was increased by 1s.8d. In Sydney, where the State Basic Wage follows the Commonwealth rate, the increase was 4s.0d., while in Melbourne and Hobart, where no State Basic Wage is declared, State awards largely follow the Commonwealth Basic Wage rates, which increased by 2s.0d. in Melbourne and 4s.0d. in Hobart.

The new Queensland rates were announced by the State Industrial Court on 20th July and became effective from 2nd August. The Western Australian rate became effective from 26th July, and the South Australian rate from 8th July. The wage rates for New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania became effective from 2nd August.

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BRISBANE.

16th August, 1948.

RETAIL PRICES INDEX.

Table No. 1.

THE "ALL ITEMS" INDEX - "C" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1948.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				June, 1947.	Sept., 1947.	December, 1947.	March, 1948.	June, 1948.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1180	1125	1136	1163	1193	1227
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1190	1141	1153	1175	1199	1232
Rockhampton	903	861	1180	1129	1142	1163	1191	1225
Townsville ..	1023	912	1219	1169	1181	1201	1230	1263
Bundaberg ..	(b)	841	1153	1108	1111	1132	1165	1203
Weighted Average								
Five Towns (a)	915	864	1182	1129	1140	1165	1195	1229
Warwick ..	914	822	1177	1125	1139	1164	1185	1220

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2. FOOD, GROCERIES AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) INDEX - "B" SERIES.

(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1948.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				June, 1947.	Sept., 1947.	December, 1947.	March, 1948.	June, 1948.
Brisbane ..	901	852	1019	966	977	1001	1039	1058
Toowoomba ..	833	821	1036	994	1000	1016	1055	1073
Rockhampton	858	837	1008	964	971	989	1025	1047
Townsville ..	1047	916	1071	1028	1034	1051	1089	1109
Bundaberg ..	(b)	799	974	937	938	954	992	1012
Weighted Average								
Five Towns (a)	892	851	1021	971	981	1003	1041	1060
Warwick ..	841	768	989	947	954	973	1004	1023

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3. AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES - FOOD AND GROCERIES, BRISBANE.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -	
		March, 1948.	June, 1948.			March, 1948.	June, 1948.
		d.	d.			d.	d.
Bread .. 2 lb.	5.33	7.00	7.25	Eggs .. 1 doz.	19.69	34.00	38.00
Flour .. 2 lb.	3.73	5.32	5.32	Milk .. 1 qt.	6.00	8.10	8.10
Tea .. 1 lb.	26.99	33.00	33.00	Beef -			
Sugar .. 1 lb.	3.98	4.44	4.44	Sirloin Roast 1 lb.	8.73	15.00	15.50
Sage .. 1 lb.	3.00	16.17	16.06	Steak Rump 1 lb.	11.34	19.50	20.00
Jam (Plum) 1½ lb.	8.02	15.32	15.55	Steak Chuck 1 lb.	5.83	9.50	9.55
Oats - Flaked 1 lb.	3.57	4.60	4.60	Rolled			
Raisins .. 1 lb.	10.57	14.93	15.42	Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	9.55	9.55
Potatoes .. 7 lb.	14.88	10.41	10.41	Mutton -			
Onions .. 1 lb.	2.93	3.27	3.59	Leg .. 1 lb.	7.75	12.00	12.55
Soap .. 1 lb.	6.20	9.24	9.24	Loin Chops 1 lb.	7.78	12.00	13.00
Butter .. 1 lb.	19.00	23.41	23.41	Pork -			
Cheese .. 1 lb.	13.28	16.23	16.32	Leg .. 1 lb.	11.40	16.00	16.40
				Chops .. 1 lb.	11.48	19.58	19.50